

The old woman immediately assumed her divine form, and said, "I am pleased by your charity; prosper" and disappeared. The poor widow's house changed suddenly into an excellent building and overflowed with grain. At the same moment, the brother's house caught fire and was burnt down. The horses died in their stables, the bullocks and cows and calves in the cattle-yard. The grain was all burnt up. Nothing was left of the clothes except ashes.

This story should have been written to inculcate the duty of charity. The descriptive portion of it was very realistic. The way of the village, the manners of the poor and the rich, and the conversation are a transcription from life. The description of the sores on the old woman's form which goddess Yellamma assumed was gruesome. The effect of such a story on the people of the Malnad may well be imagined. The bright light and the deep shade, the great silence of the nights and the loneliness in which their lives are enveloped, make these people highly superstitious and teach them to see a spirit in every tree and the devil round every corner. Their hearts should thrill with fear at the thought that any old woman whom they meet may be Yellamma. The only consolation is that she can be pleased by giving corn. Songs like this do perhaps as much harm in lowering people's courage as. good in making them charitable.

People in the villages often hear
popular versions
of the episodes of the *Majabharata* and the
*Ramayana**
The outline of the narrative is taken from
these poems